

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: VERSATILITY IN THE MODERN PERFORMER:
THREE DIVERSE OPERA ROLES

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This dissertation project consisted of performances of three diverse operatic roles. The goal was to examine the challenges and benefits of performing diverse repertoire (baroque, classical, and romantic opera, in this case) and to observe how vocal and acting techniques might adjust to different styles and voice classifications.

On December 3, 5, 11, and 13, 2003, I performed a composite role in *Fatal Song*, directed by Leon Major, in the Robert & Arlene Kogod Theatre. This opera pastiche, premiered in 1996, contains spoken dialogue, and the music originates from famous eighteenth and nineteenth-century operas. I explored the challenges and benefits of playing three different, well-known opera characters within the same opera, performing four different languages within the same opera, and performing spoken dialogue in an opera. My roles in this pastiche of famous opera included

Lucia from *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti, Manon from *Manon* by Jules Massenet, and Pamina from *Die Zauberflöte* by W.A. Mozart.

On January 28 and 29, 2005, I performed the role of Nice in *Eurilla e Alcindo*, a serenata by Antonio Vivaldi, in Homer Ulrich Recital Hall; musical direction by Joseph Gascho and stage direction by Kate Vetter Cain. I explored the challenges and benefits of preparing baroque ornamentation, singing without a conductor, performing an unknown work, staging a work that is not traditionally staged, singing with minimal sets and costumes, and singing with period instruments.

On April 16, 20, and 24, 2005, I performed the role of Musetta in Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, directed by Pat Diamond and conducted by Jeffrey Rink, in the Ina & Jack Kay Theatre. I examined the challenges and benefits of singing with a large orchestra of modern instruments, singing Puccini rubato and coordinating this with the conductor, and singing a role in one of the most well-known operas in today's repertoire.

As a result of this investigation, I concluded that singing different styles, and singing outside one's voice classification, within reason, is beneficial. The knowledge, skill, confidence and insight I acquired by becoming more versatile benefited me as a performer and as a teacher.

VERSATILITY IN THE MODERN PERFORMER:
THREE DIVERSE OPERA ROLES

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Program Notes

Fatal Song, or The Great Opera Murders

by Kathleen Cahill

“...for God’s sake, whatever you do, don’t sing...
Singing can be dangerous. Very very dangerous.”

Shortly after the curtain rises in Kathleen Cahill’s *Fatal Song*, Violetta (Verdi’s *La Traviata*) poses this warning to Mimi (Puccini’s *La Bohème*), Lucia (Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Giulietta (*Les contes d’Hoffmann*). They have noticed that their singing sisters, Gilda (Verdi’s *Rigoletto*), Antonia (Offenbach’s *Les contes d’Hoffmann*) and “others...too many others” are being murdered one by one. Who is doing this? And why? The doomed heroines set out to catch the culprit/s before it is too late.

Fatal Song sets out to explore this strange pattern: Why are so many women sacrificed in 19th century opera? “It’s a plot!” yells Lucia. Perhaps it is.

Kathleen Cahill, the librettist for *Fatal Song*, clearly noticed this pattern, and believes it is something about 19th century romantic society that considered a woman’s death sublimely pathetic. She saw that a woman’s death was being used as a dramatic device and concluded that there was a very sentimental idea about the death of women at the time, and that most composers felt it was absolutely the most moving device invented for the operatic stage. Thus, composers constructed the deaths of women in their operas to be supremely beautiful.

Non-nineteenth-century heroines, mostly from Mozart operas, appear in *Fatal Song* to serve as foils to their paranoid successors. Susanna (Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*) simply cannot understand what they are so worried about, since she is in a Mozart opera... “I’d be

worried, but death isn't in my contract," she states at the end, after she notices that she is the only soprano left standing. Toward the end of the classical period in Europe, a drastic social change occurred. Most classical composers wrote opera for the courts, but with the rise of the middle class, the industrial revolution and the emergence of democratic sentiments, the romantic movement emerged. Operas were now written for the public, and non-noble, middle class characters began to appear as the heroes and heroines.

The Creation of *Fatal Song*:

How did this exciting new opera pastiche, fusing some of the best-loved soprano arias from the operatic repertoire with dialogue examining soprano death, come about? *Fatal Song* was first performed in 1996 by members of the Maryland Opera Studio, at the University of Maryland's Homer Ulrich Recital Hall. The piece was commissioned by Leon Major, director of the studio, for two reasons: Due to necessity and to pay homage. He needed to find a work that featured four sopranos, which is virtually an impossible feat. The graduate program in opera at the University of Maryland requires that each student perform a leading opera role. The class of 1996 consisted of four sopranos. Necessity being the mother of invention, he commissioned the work. The other reason he commissioned *Fatal Song* was to honor a dear friend and colleague, William Huckaby. Huckaby had been a vocal coach for the Maryland Opera Studio, and two years before the premiere, he and Major had casually discussed the idea of celebrating and exploring women in opera. Shortly after serious discussion began about creating an opera from this idea, William Huckaby died of a heart attack at the age of 50. The Maryland Opera Studio dedicated the production to him.

The piece was premiered as part of a 10-day symposium on women, November 15-24, 1996, with participation by the University of Maryland School of Music, the Music Library, and the departments of English, French, Italian and Women's Studies. The symposium consisted of lectures by renowned scholars, recitals, exhibits, and panel discussions on women in opera with guests such as Thomas Stewart, Evelyn Lear, Carmen Balthrop and Linda Mabbs.

Fatal Song is unique in that it requires the singers both to sing and speak, most opera dispensing of dialogue in favor of recitative. They must sing all of the arias in their original languages, and then speak the dialogue in English. Major recalls that they decided to do this for purely pedagogical reasons: The students needed the experience of singing the arias in their original languages. The dialogue in English was used as a tool for the students to sharpen their acting skills. *Fatal Song* also asks the performers to sing at least 3 different roles in one show. This challenges them vocally, since many roles are in different fachs/voice categories, and their acting skills, since they must transition quickly from one character into another. Major wanted to challenge the performers to stretch beyond what they thought they were capable of, both vocally and in terms of acting. He did not ask them to stretch beyond reason; he consulted the voice teachers at the University, and made sure that unreasonable roles were not included in the work. The roles were chosen carefully, with each particular performer in mind.

About This Production:

Tonight's production of *Fatal Song* is the third production of the work, since its premiere in 1996. The piece has been revised: Some characters have been cut, and some of

the roles are distributed differently among the singers. Also, the premiere, as well as the second production, featured four larger-than-life-sized puppets, representing the composers Verdi, Puccini, Offenbach and Massenet. Each puppet was controlled by three actors dressed in black, who would work the arms, hands, etc. They turned out to be awkward, seeming to get in the way of the piece itself, and in the end, they were not necessary. For this production, Major instead decided to use electronic images of the composers on plasma screens, hung above the stage, looming over our doomed heroines like gods. The screens also enable the use of surtitles, to translate the foreign languages into English. One “invisible” mime (ideally, Major would like to use two) is now used to do all of the composers’ bidding on stage, resulting in a much swifter and wittier piece.

This production of *Fatal Song* is part of a cabaret series, produced by the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at Maryland and the Maryland Opera Studio. This intimate cabaret setting, in the small Kogod Theatre, allows the audience to drink and eat, sitting at tables, thereby giving a more casual feel to the usual formal evening of opera. This *Cabaret Today* series includes another work whose libretto is written by Kathleen Cahill, *Tale of Two Cities: Paris and Berlin in the Twenties*, celebrating the music and poetry that emerged in the decade after World War I.

So, please enjoy the drinks, the food, and the deaths of the heroines of 19th century opera. It will be beautiful.

—Jennifer Royall

Program Notes

Eurilla e Alcindo (Mio cor, povero cor), Serenata a Tré, R.V. 690

Music by Antonio Vivaldi

Antonio Vivaldi (b. Venice 1678, d. Vienna 1741) studied to be a priest since childhood, though his vocation as a priest was more a choice of his family than his own. Music was his passion, and he showed obvious signs of genius as a violinist at a young age. Known as the ‘Red Priest’ because he possessed red hair, he was ordained in 1703; however, he managed to avoid performing his duties as a priest, claiming to have a serious illness that had been with him since childhood. He therefore was able to devote his entire life to his music. He had bronchial asthma, but his letters suggest that he was prone to exaggeration and lying, so it is doubtful that someone who managed to perform and teach violin, travel for his music, and compose with such fury, could not, because of ill-health, get through saying an entire Mass.

Since Vivaldi spent most of his years living and composing in Venice, the musical life of this city is important to understand. Abbé Conti said of Venice at the time: “The only talk here is about the operas that are to be performed.”¹ Florence established itself as the birthplace of opera in 1600, but Venice became the birthplace of the first public opera theatres in 1637, making Venice the “city of opera *par excellence*”² during the 17th century. Opera was now public domain, open to everyone, mingling all social classes together, as Venice also did in its celebrations and its Carnival. Opera had previously been the property of the elite.

¹ Patrick Barbier, *Vivaldi's Venice – Music and celebration in the baroque era*. Trans. Margaret Crosland. (London: Souvenir Press, 2003), 108.

² Barbier, 108.

By the time Vivaldi premiered his first opera, at the age of 35, he had already gained tremendous recognition for his talent as a violinist and as a composer of instrumental music. Vivaldi was drawn to the business of writing opera principally because opera reigned supreme in Venice. He wanted more fame; opera, he thought, was the way to achieve it.

Alongside opera, stood the serenata. The serenata first appeared in Italy and Vienna (at the time, an Italian literary colony) around 1660, and virtually disappeared by the early 19th century with the rise of romanticism. It is a genre which falls somewhere between the opera and the cantata (J.S. Bach entitled two of his cantatas 'serenata'). Like opera, serenatas featured elaborate costumes and sets, but like the cantata, was normally unstaged, the singers reading from their parts. Serenatas often did not have an identifiable plot, which were mostly based on mythological and allegorical subjects. They usually had a strong moral emphasis.

Serenatas were most often commissioned for private events. Venice was the capital of an independent Republic and therefore had no court. Embassies and 'residencies' of the principal States of Europe were scattered throughout the city, most importantly those of the Austrian emperor, and the kings of France, Spain and England. These monarchies and States were always conscious of their image, trying to impress Venice with the pomp of lavish celebrations which would mark major events in their countries (a military victory, a noble birth, a wedding, a birthday, etc.) Music was a vital part of all celebrations in Venice, so these nobles and ambassadors would commonly commission serenatas from Vivaldi and other Venetian composers for these luxurious

displays. During Vivaldi's time, the French Embassy, in particular, had a reputation for frequent, extravagant celebrations.

The musical structure of the serenata was similar to opera at the time: Da capo arias alternating with recitative, with a rare duet or ensemble. In comparison to the huge spectacle of opera, the serenata was smaller in scale: Shorter in length and requiring a smaller number of singers, usually three or four, and a small string orchestra. At times, wind instruments and chorus were also used, though most movements marked as 'coro' are meant simply for the principal singers to sing as an ensemble.

The Venetian opera audience grew to expect inventive and spectacular stage machinery; thrills and spectacle were required. Naturally, given the audience expectation in Venice, serenatas were also expected to feature ingenious, elaborate set design and stage machinery. Serenatas, most often performed outdoors, at night, under artificial light, frequently used water as a backdrop for the performances, as the canals and the general overwhelming presence of water in Venice presented this opportunity. This could be the reason that water is often an important theme in these pieces. For Vivaldi's serenata, *L'Unione della Pace e di Morte*, composed for the birth of the King of France's twin daughters, an impressive stage was constructed on the water:

...all outside walls of the Palace were illuminated, as well as a kind of amphitheatre or platform set up on the lagoon on large boats. This construction was sixty feet high and fifty feet wide, representing the Palace of the Sun as described by Ovid. In the middle of this palace, standing on twelve Corinthian columns, was a statue of Apollo with his lyre, and surmounting everything were the arms of France. The edifice was completed by a brilliant image of the sun on top of a pyramid. One could also see the signs of the Zodiac, with that of the Twins in the middle of them.³

³ Barbier, 172.

Although serenatas were usually written for private events such as the one described above, invited guests watched from the French Embassy gardens, while uninvited guests (the Venetian public) floated on the water in boats in order to watch; in essence creating a public event.

Serenatas were composed for bonafide public events as well. The Venetians came to favor the serenata over the full-length opera for the last night of Carnival, leaving more time for celebration afterwards. Besides Carnival, Venetians would also hold public serenatas for events such as the arrival of an important visitor or the marriage uniting two important families.

Eurilla e Alcindo was composed c. 1719. Vivaldi left Venice in 1718 to serve as maestro di cappella da camera to the governor of Mantua until 1720, so he logically may have composed the work in Mantua, although this is unknown. Half of his serenatas were premiered in his native city of Venice.

According to *Grove Music Online*, of the 8 serenatas attributed to Vivaldi, only 3 of the scores survive, 2 in facsimile only. Vivaldi claimed to have written 94 operas, but only about 50 can be attributed to him, and only 23 scores exist today. Vivaldi certainly composed successful operas, serenatas, and sacred music, but the fame of his vocal composition pales in comparison to that of his instrumental music, particularly his concertos, which were published, sold and performed across Europe.

About this production:

Despite the fact that serenatas were unstaged presentations, we have decided to memorize and stage *Eurilla e Alcindo*. Unlike many serenatas, this one has an identifiable plot: The nymph Eurilla attempts to win the love of the prideful shepherd, Alcindo. There is certainly a moral to this story, as pride, stubbornness and harshness are condemned in the end. The occasion for which Vivaldi wrote *Eurilla e Alcindo* is uncertain, though the purpose was supposedly to commemorate the imprisonment of a certain religious leader whose sect refused to bow to papal authority. The shepherd, Alcindo's stubbornness and refusal to love the nymph Eurilla, possibly symbolizes this sect's refusal to submit.⁴

Eurilla e Alcindo is originally scored for 3 voices, strings, oboes and hunting horns. For this production, Joseph Gascho, music director, decided to arrange the piece for 2 violins and continuo.

- Jennifer Royall

⁴ Talbot, Michael, "Serenata," Grove's Opera Online, Ed. L. Macy. (Accessed December 2004)
<<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

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Program Notes

La Bohème

Music by Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924)
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

*They even said that Bohème would be taken off before the end of the season. I, who put into Bohème all my soul and loved it boundlessly and loved its creatures more than I can say, returned to my hotel completely heartbroken. There was in me sadness, melancholy, a wish to cry...I passed a most miserable night. And in the morning I was greeted with the spiteful salute of the critics.*¹

– Giacomo Puccini

When *La Bohème* premiered in Turin on February 1, 1896, the audience was respectful but not overwhelmed. The reviews, the next morning, were not optimistic. Realism was not yet accepted in opera; Bizet's *Carmen* and Verdi's *La Traviata* suffered from similar objections many years before.

Then there was Palermo. During this premiere of *La Bohème*, in April of the same year, the audience was insatiable, cheering well past midnight, demanding an encore. The conductor finally satisfied the audience's demand and repeated the last scene, starting with Mimi's entrance. Some of the orchestra members had already left the theatre, and the actors had already gotten out of costume. They performed in their street clothes; the audience did not mind. *La Bohème* was a triumph and remains an audience favorite to this day.

La Bohème was Puccini's fourth opera, but only his second wild success, the first being *Manon Lescaut* for which he gained wide recognition. Progress was slow in the early stages of *La Bohème*, due in large part to the composer's hectic schedule following the successful premiere of *Manon Lescaut* in February 1893. His publisher, Giulio Ricordi,

¹ Rebecca Knaust, *The complete guide to La Bohème*. (New York: McAfee Books, 1978), 15.

arranged seemingly endless promotional tours, taking much of Puccini's time away from composition. During these tours, he would frequently supervise the final rehearsals of a new production, often advising the singers, conductors and producers and sometimes making last minute revisions to the music. This difficult schedule lasted nearly a year after *Manon Lescaut* premiered.

Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica collaborated on the libretto for *La Bohème*. Giacosa was a sensitive, thoughtful, dependable and well-known writer of his day. Illica was prolific and popular, known for his quick wit, imagination and his hot temper. They were polar opposites, the combination of which made for a wonderful partnership for this, their first team effort for the operatic stage. This complementary partnership would later produce two more great Puccini successes: *Tosca* (1900) and *Madama Butterfly* (1904).

Puccini's *La Bohème* is based on Henry Murger's novel *Scenes de la Vie de Bohème*, and the play *La Vie de Bohème* by Murger and Théodore Barrière (premiered in Paris, 1894). The novel's original form was a collection of sketches, written for a small newspaper from 1845 through 1848. Giacosa and Illica were faced with the task of extracting only a few characters and scenes from the many situations presented in this segmented format, and molding it into understandable operatic form.

Puccini, with his addiction to revision, did not make this monumental challenge any easier. Puccini often had musical themes already composed before the libretto was complete, which may account for the vast amount of cuts and revisions he requested; if the scene did not seem to fit the music he had composed, he would require changes. When Illica objected,

Puccini exclaimed, “Must I blindly accept the Gospel according to Illica?...I have my vision of *La bohème*.”²

Both librettists threatened to resign from the project at different phases of the process, due to Puccini’s impatience and constant reworking of the libretto. Giulio Ricordi, a shrewd businessman, and Puccini’s publisher, played a crucial role during these crises by acting as peacemaker between composer and librettists. In a letter to Ricordi, Giacosa complains:

I confess to you that I’m tired to death of this constant remaking, retouching, adding, correcting, piecing together, extending on the one hand and reducing on the other...I’ve written this damned libretto from beginning to end three times, and certain sections four and five times. How am I to finish at that rate?...I swear to you, they’ll never trap me into doing libretti again!³

One of the biggest disputes was the deletion of an entire scene in the 1893 version of the libretto, the text of which still exists today. The librettists insisted on keeping the scene, while Puccini insisted on deleting it. In the end, Puccini got his way, and the final product is a wonderful libretto; however, this deleted scene, which takes place in the courtyard of Musetta’s flat, is of great interest, as it contains interesting character details omitted from the *La Bohème* we know today. It reveals a close friendship between Mimì and Musetta, as the following line from Musetta illustrates:

MUSETTA
How often, Mimì
I have wanted you here
And I have waited for you
Always...every day...⁴

² Arthur Groos and Roger Parker, *Giacomo Puccini – La bohème*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 44.

³ Groos and Parker, 49.

⁴ Groos and Parker, 161.

The *La Bohème* we know and love shows little interaction between the two women; one assumes they have no relationship at all until the final Act. The scene also shows hard evidence of Rodolfo's jealousy, includes Mimì meeting the Viscount for whom she leaves Rodolfo after Act III, and reveals a sweetness in Musetta's and Marcello's passionate love for one another. It is interesting to read this scene and wonder what a different *La Bohème* it might have been.

Finally, in early September 1894, due to the talents of Giulio Ricordi, the diplomat and mediator, the crises between the composer and the librettists settled down and the libretto was completed over the course of two years of hard labor.

Puccini completed the score in December 1895, after eight months of intense work. Puccini often used musical material from earlier works, including the "Bohemian theme" that opens the opera which is taken from a principal theme of *Capriccio Sinfonico*, a piece that he wrote as a student. He was perhaps inspired by the memories of his own personal bohemian life as a student. He also used some musical material that he had composed for a recently abandoned project, *La lupa* (The She Wolf).

Leoncavallo vs. Puccini:

On May 5, 1897, fifteen months following the premiere of *La Bohème*, Puccini's friend and fellow composer, Ruggero Leoncavallo premiered his own version of *La Bohème*. These "dueling *Bohèmes*" reveal an interesting story: The two composers had a public quarrel over the priority rights to the idea. It seems that Leoncavallo had offered Puccini his own libretto of *La Bohème* previously, as he often wrote libretti for other composers. Puccini refused his libretto, apparently claiming disinterest in the subject, because he was in the

process of developing ideas for another opera, *La lupa*. After Puccini had rejected his libretto, Leoncavallo decided to compose *La Bohème* on his own. Puccini later abandoned *La lupa* in favor of *La Bohème*, but hired his own team of writers to work on the libretto. When Puccini mentioned to Leoncavallo, during casual conversation, that he was making good progress on *La Bohème*, Leoncavallo was outraged and attempted to claim rights to the subject. Claiming rights to this subject was impossible, as Murger's novel by this time was no longer protected under copyright, so no one could claim rights to it. A battle ensued in the papers the next day, in March of 1893, each composer claiming the idea as his own. Puccini challenges, "Let him compose and I will compose, and the public will judge."⁵

The public did judge: Leoncavallo's *La Bohème* is all but forgotten today. It is interesting to note how the two composers differed in their approach to *La Bohème*.

Leoncavallo features Marcello and Musetta as the principal characters, until the death of Mimi in the fourth act, creating a rather unbalanced plot. Leoncavallo's libretto and score are much more dense and complex, creating more of a social commentary of the period than an effective drama. His is a dark story, focusing on the intense misery of the Latin Quarter. For example, in Act III, at the discovery of her latest infidelity, Marcello brutally attacks Musetta almost to the point of strangulation.

In comparison, Puccini's version is more lighthearted and carefree, focusing more on the love, hope and camaraderie of the bohemian life, until inevitable reality forces itself into their lives with the death of Mimi. As Rodolfo laments in Act III, "Mimi is a hot-house flower which poverty has withered. Love is not enough to give her life again." Mimi's death is reality; a devastating blow to the bohemians. They had previously been able to get through

⁵ Groos and Parker, 32.

life with their imaginations, using fantasy to give them hope and humor in the rough times. But now they were helpless. Nothing will be the same after this traumatic event in their bohemian lives: As stated in the preface of Murger's novel "a delightful life and a terrible one."

—*Jennifer Royall*

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APPENDIX A

EURILLA E ALCINDO by Antonio Vivaldi

Translation by Dr. Kate Vetter Cain

PARTE PRIMA

EURILLA

1.

Mio cor, povero cor, sì, sì, t'intendo,

Tu senti un non sò che,
Non distingui cos'è,
Ma ti da pena.

La libertà, cor mio, non ti contendo,

Ma sei, credilo a me,
Tu stesso il fabbro a te
Di tua catena.

2.

Ben, che ti sembra, o Nice, di quel gentil Pastore

che dagl'occhi vivaci ad ogni Ninfa in
sen getta la face?

NICE

E bello, è vago, io tel confesso Eurilla,
mà un gran difetto egl'ha.

EURILLA

L'attento sguardo che ben l'esaminò
no'l vede ancora.

NICE

Purtroppo lo vedrai: non s'innamora.

EURILLA

Tu m'uccidesti, o Nice, e appena nato,

EURILLA

1.

My heart, poor heart, yes, yes, I
understand you,
You feel a certain something,
You can't tell what it is,
But it gives you pain.

Freedom, my heart, I don't deny
you
But you are, believe me,
you yourself the maker
Of your own chain.

So, what do you think, oh Nice, of
that gentle shepherd
From whose vivacious eyes every
nymph turns her face to her breast?

He is beautiful, he is charming, I
confess Eurilla,
But he has a big defect.

The careful look that has examined
him quite well
Has yet to notice one. [Upon
careful examination I have
yet to notice one]

Nonetheless you will see: He does
not fall in love.

You have killed me, oh Nice, and
hardly born,

il fior di mie speranze, con man troppo crudel,
tu schianti, e sveli.

NICE

Così sente il mio cor. Prova, e vedrai.

EURILLA

Sì bello, e sì crudel, nol credo mai.

3.

Con i vezzi lusinghieri
Mi consola la speranza,
E mi dice al cor che spero
L'amorosa mia costanza.

4. NICE

Eccolo, che con passo sciolto così,
come ha disciolto il core, verso noi s'incammina.

EURILLA

Osserva, o Nice, la Maestà, che gli balena in volto.

NICE

Bene, ma vedo ancora la libertà,
che gli difende il core.

EURILLA

Oh, che dar non si può cor senza amore.

NICE

Ti lascio dunque in braccio a' pensier tuoi.

EURILLA

Va, Nice amata, ci rivedremo poi.

NICE

5.

the flower of my hopes, with such
a cruel hand,
You crush, and uproot.

My heart feels it is thus. Try, and
you will see.

So beautiful, I can never believe
him to be so cruel.

With flattering ways
Hope consoles me,
And says to my heart
That my loving constancy may still
hope

Here he is, he that with a stride so
free, as free as his heart,
towards us approaches.

Observe, oh Nice, the majesty that
shines from his face.

Well yes, but I also see the
freedom which defends his heart.

Oh, one cannot give one's heart
away without [evidence of] Love.

I leave you thus in the arms of your
thoughts.

Go, beloved Nice, we'll see each
other later.

Digli, che miri almeno
Il tuo bel volto, e'l seno,

E al tuo bel seno, al volto,
Resister non potrà.

Forse vedrai men fiero
Quel cor cotanto altero
D'amor tra' lacci colto
Perder la libertà.

ALCINDO

6.

Mi sento in petto
L'allegro core
Parlarmi solo
Di libertà.

Non ho diletto
D'un vano amore,
Ch'eguale al duolo
Gioia non ha.

7.

Bella Ninfa, ti serbi sempre propizio il Cielo
Oro al Crin, latte al Seno, e rose al Volto.

EURILLA

Addio Pastor gentile,
del tuo florido Aprile
la vezzosa stagion mai si consumi,

e in te le grazie tutte, che ben degno ne sei,
piovano i numi.

ALCINDO

Non può negare il Cielo l'onor delle sue grazie
a sì bei voti, lo prego ben ch'imprima
gratitudine eguale alla mia stima.

Tell him, that if he looks only
from your beautiful face to your
breast,
And from your breast to your face,
He won't be able to resist.

Perhaps you will see less fierce
That heart that is so proud
By love caught in chains
Lose its freedom.

I feel in my breast
My happy heart
Speak to me only
Of freedom.

I don't take delight
In empty love,
Which, equal to pain,
Gives no joy.

Beautiful nymph, may Heaven ever
be favorable to you,
Gold on your brow, milk in your
breast, and roses on your cheeks

Goodbye gentle shepherd,
from your flowering April,
may the charming season never
end,
and on you may all the blessings,
of which you are well worthy,
Shower down from the gods.

Heaven cannot neglect to honor
such lovely prayers
with its blessings; I well pray that
it shows gratitude
Equal to my esteem.

EURILLA

Alcindo, or che disciolto dal custode rigor,

che pria tenea fermo il tuo piè,
nella natia Capanna, dimmi, come ti piace

il libero goder di questa vita.

ALCINDO

Assai mi piace, e piacerebbe più,

se non sentissi un rimorso crudele
d'aver con troppa fretta
posti al pubblico sguardo i miei difetti.

EURILLA

Ah modestia crudel, tu mi saetti!

Qual delle nostre Ninfe è poi distinta

dal sospirato onor de' tuoi riflessi?

ALCINDO

Con ossequio devoto venero in fronte à tutte

frà quelle treccie d'oro
quell'eccelsa beltà, che splende in loro.

EURILLA

Venerar no, non basta, ma adorar, ed amar,

indi in tribute offrirle il cuor.

ALCINDO

Sdegna codesta offerta la libertà,

Ch'al alme il Cielo impresse.

EURILLA

Non è viltà un tribute che ridonda

in piacer; Provalo, e poi, condanna

Alcindo, now freed from that
strictness of your guardian
which first had arrested your step,
in your Capanna homeland, tell
me, how you like
The freedom to enjoy life.

I like it very much, and would like
it even better,
If I didn't feel a cruel remorse
from having, with too much hurry,
Put my defects before the eyes of
the public.

Ah, cruel modesty, you shoot me
with arrows!
Which of our nymphs is thus
distinguished
By the sighed-after honor of your
reflections?

With obsequious devotion I came
before all,
among those golden braids,
That excess of beauty, which
shines from them.

To venerate, no, it isn't enough,
but to adore, to love,
Thus in tribute to offer her your
heart.

The freedom that Heaven
imprinted upon souls
disdains that offer

A tribute that ends in pleasure is no
vice.
Try it, and then condemn it if you

se potrai, cotanti errori.

8.

Nò, che non è viltà,
A' rai d'una beltà
Offrir ogn'or fedel e l'alma, e il cuore.

E troppo il bel piacer
Sperar, e poi goder
La soave mercè d'un vero amore.

ALCINDO

10.

Si folle non son io, tanti ogn'or intesi

che a sospirar condanna

la superba beltà sempre tiranna.

11.

Nel suo carcere ristretto,
Non d'affetto
L'usignuol cantando và.

Col soave dolce canto
Piange intanto
La perduta libertà.

EURILLA

12.

O quanto folle egl'è, se andar si crede

della sua libertà, sempre fastoso.
Ma già cauta l'attendo sul vicin colle,

ove si porge amica la cristallina fonte,

e suol ridursi delle belve la caccia.

Qui del cuor d'Alcindo, esperta cacciatrice,

io vado in caccia.

can,
As so much error.

No, it isn't a vice,
To the eyes of a beauty
To offer ever faithful both soul and
heart.

It is such a lovely delight
to hope, and then to enjoy
The gentle mercy of a true love.

I am not so foolish, many have
learned
that the proud, always tyrannous,
beauty
condemns one to sigh.

Restricted to its cage,
Not from affection
The Nightingale goes singing.

With the soft sweet song
It cries for
Its lost freedom.

O how foolish he is, if he goes on
believing
In his freedom, always boastful.
But already cautious, I await him
on the neighboring hill,
where the crystalline fountain
offers friendship,
And the beasts find refuge from the
hunt.
Here after the heart of Alcindo,
clever huntress,
I go hunting.

13.

Alla Caccia d'un cuore spietato
Teso ho l'arco nel viso, nel vizzo,

Quando poi sarà preda l'ingrato
Vò punirlo con odio, con sprezzo.

In pursuit of a disdainful heart
I have trained the bow upon his
face, his charms,
When thus the ingrate will be prey,
I will punish him with hatred, with
disdain.

NICE

14.

Amica Eurilla, dimmi, come Alcindo rispose
agl'inviti d'amor?

Friend Eurilla, tell me, how did
Alcindo respond
To your invitation of love?

EURILLA

Nice diletta, nel mio d'uopo maggior
giungi opportuna.

Delightful Nice, you arrive just at
my time of need.

NICE

E che? Di vaga Ninfa stancar forse pretende
i prieghi ancora?

The prayers of a pretty nymph he
perhaps still presumes to
tire out?

EURILLA

Anzi ostenta con fasto un seno
impenetrabile ai possenti dardi d'Amor.

Rather say that a breast
impenetrable to the powerful darts
of Love can put on a boastful
show.

NICE

Oh non temer amica egli s'arrenderà.

Oh, don't fear friend, he will give
in.

Puo l'opra mia tutta per consolarti
dar novelle, che le perdite tue
son danni miei.

The work I do to console you can
give us new results, for
your losses hurt me too

15.

Ad infiammar quell seno,
Vedrai, che in un baleno
Amore porgerà
L'accesa face.

To inflame that breast,
You will see that in a flash
love will offer
Its glowing face.

Così resa amorosa
Quell'alma ora ritrosa
Il tuo cuore goderà
La cara pace.

Thus rendered loving
that soul now reluctant
and your heart will enjoy
Sweet peace.

PARTE SECONDA

EURILLA

Se all' estivo ardor cocente
Languie il fior nel verde prato,

Freddo umor soave, e grato
Lo ravviva, el lo consola.

Così ancora la cara speme,
Col suo latte alle mie pene,
Mi ricinge e racconsola.

ALCINDO

1.

Acque placide che correte
Dolce imago a me porgete
Di soave libertà.

E da voi ben solo apprendo
Giunto sciolto ogn'or fuggendo
Quel dolor ch'amor ne dà.

2.

Tenta lo so, ma pur lo tenta in vano,

d'incatenarmi il cuor la ninfa Eurilla.

EURILLA

Or' vedi Alcindo in questo fiorito

ameno colle tutto spirar amore.

NICE

Deh osserva sì, ten priego,
come quell Zefiretto fido bacciar
quell fior, indi quell'onda

lambe costante ogn'or la verde sponda.

3.

Come l'erba in vago prato
Se languisce, o un mesto fiore
Dal Ruscello vita prende,

Si d'Alcindo il volto amato

If in the burning summer's ardor
the flower languishes in the green
meadow,
The cool liquid soft, and gracious,
Revives it, and consoles it.

Thus still the dear hope,
With its milk for my pains,
Restores and consoles me

Placid waters that run
Sweet image to me bring
Of gentle freedom.

And from you alone I well learn,
arrived free, always fleeing,
That pain which love gives.

The nymph Eurilla tries I know,
but truly she tries in vain
To enchain my heart.

Now you see Alcindo in this
flowery
Pleasant hill, breathing only love.

Oh observe, yes, I pray of you,
how that faithful Zephyr kisses
that flower, how that constant
wave
Laps always the green bank.

As the grass in the pretty meadow
languishes, or a sad flower
from the brooklet takes life,

Thus Alcindo's beloved face

Della vaga Eurilla al core
Fiamma degna e spirto accende.

to the heart of the pretty Eurilla
Deigns to flame and light her spirit.

ALCINDO

4.

A'suo grado scherzar può ben Eurilla,
ma so ben io, che a coli più sublime
spiega l'ali amorose il suo cupido.

At her height Eurilla can well
tease,
but I know well that to even higher
peaks
her desire spreads amorous wings

EURILLA

Mà timido nocchier non giunge al lido.

But a timid sailor never arrives at
the shore.

ALCINDO

5.

Dell'alma superba
La fiamma riserba.
A chi può inalzarti
D'un soglio al fulgor.

The proud soul
Reserves its flame
for whomever can raise you
From the throne to splendor.

Nè perder l'amore
Del grande tuo core
Con vile Pastor.

Nor lose the love
of your great heart
With a simple shepherd

EURILLA

6.

Alcindo, Alcindo, io t'apro il sen,
m'ascolta: Ah! ch'importuno giunge

a chiudermi nel labor il più che bramo,
per altro io ti direi: Alcindo, io t'amo.

Alcindo, Alcindo, I open my heart
hear me: Ah! What misfortune
comes to close my lips to
what I most want!
Otherwise I would say to you:
Alcindo, I love you.

7.

La dolce aurette,
Che vezzosetta
Spirando,
Scherzando,
Tu vedi col fior
Ti dice ch'amar
Dovresti al mio sen.
Diletti,
Affetti
Promette vezzosa

The sweet little breeze
which you see charmingly
blowing,
playing,
with the flower
tells you that you should
Love my heart.
Delight,
Affection,
promises charmingly

La fiamma amorosa,
Stringendo il suo ben.

the amorous flame,
Embracing its beloved.

ALCINDO

8.

Non dilleggiar mi più.
Già so ben io, che a vasti amori avvezza

ad amar un pastor chinare non puoi.

Lascia in pace il mio cuor, ama gl'Eroi.

Don't deride me further,
I already well know, that you
cannot bow to love a
Shepherd, accustomed as you are
to grand love affairs.
Leave my heart in peace, love
heroes instead.

9.

L'altero bianco giglio
Non degna la viola,
Perchè selvaggia, e sola,
Superbo di baciare.

The proud white lily
Does not favor the violet,
wild and lonely,
Because it is too proud to kiss.

Bensi talor si sposa
Con la purpurea rosa,
Perchè il vago vermiglio
Sol può così formar.

Rather it weds
the purple rose
because only thus the pretty red
Can be created.

NICE

10.

Dove, dimmi o indiscreto
apprendesti il rigor che fai tuo fasto?

Non regna tal fierezza
nella placida pace de' Pastori,
ov'hanno il nido i più soavi amori.

Where, tell me o indiscreet one,
Did you learn the harshness that
you make your pleasure?
Such pride does not reign
in the placid peace of shepherds,
The nest where are the softest
loves.

11.

Di Cocito nell'orrido Regno

Ha ricetta fierezza, e rigor,
Ma ove spiega il piacer i suoi vanti

Entro il tenero sen degl'amanti
Sol pietade n'alberga, ed amor.

The cook in the horrible kingdom
(Hell)
has prescribed pride, and strictness,
but where pleasure spreads its
praises,
between the tender hearts of lovers,
Only pity lodges, and love.

EURILLA

12.

Almen fingi d'amarmi, e si lusinghi

At least pretend to love me, and

la mia povera fiamma.

thus flatter
My poor flame.

ALCINDO

E d'amar vuoi ch'io finga?
Eccomi pronto a compiacerti.
Incivile così poi non son io.
Mio Tesore...

And you want me to fake love?
Here I am ready to oblige you.
So uncivil I am not.
My treasure. . .

EURILLA

Mio diletto...

My delight. . .

A DUE

Idolo mio!

My idol!

ALCINDO

Eurilla, o Dio, da questi,
benchè mentiti affetti, mi scese
un tal piacer furtive in seno,

che mi costringe alfin ora ad amarti.

Eurilla, o God, from these, even
though lying caresses, arose in me
a certain furtive pleasure in my
breast,
That at last draws me now to love
you.

EURILLA

Oh, mi dilleggi, o Alcindo;
se potesse il cuor prestarti fede
pronta n'avresti ancor la gran mercede.

Oh, you are teasing me, o Alcindo;
If the heart could lend you fidelity
You might yet have the great
reward.

13.

Vorresti lusingarmi
Lo veggo, sì, per farmi
Trofeo di crudeltà.

You wished to flatter me
I see it, yes, to make me
Trophy of cruelty.

Si folle la speranza
In me già non s'avanza
Che in te sii fedeltà

Such a foolish hope
does not grow in me
that you will be faithful

ALCINDO

14.

No, non fingo; di tua beltà sù l'ara

giuro d'amarti, ed a quest'ora io sento

pieta chieder il cuor al suo tormento.

No, I am not faking; for your
beauty upon the altar
I swear to love you, and from this
moment I feel
Pity call the heart to its torment.

EURILLA

Or senti qual mercede
sì prepara al tuo amor.
Lunge, o superbo, vanne dagl'occhi miei.

Preda d'amor io ti bramai
a fine di punir ne'l tuo sen tanta alterigia.

Olà, Ninfe, Pastori: nell'amorosa caccia

colsi la fiera onde co'scherni nostri

ad isbranarle il cuor pronti vi chiamo

Contro un altero un gran rigor io bramo.

CORO

15.

Si punisca, si sbrani, s'uccida

Il superbo spietato suo cuor.
Delle Ninfe nel sen non s'annida

Mai pietà con chi vanta rigor.

FINIS

Now listen to what thanks

Is prepared for your love.

Hence, o proud one, get out of my
sight.

I wanted to see you prey to love

In order to punish such haughtiness
in your breast.

Listen nymphs, shepherds; in the
amorous hunt

the wild beast is captured where,
with our trickery,

I call you to be ready to devour its
heart

Against pride I employ a great deal
of harshness.

Let it be punished, torn apart,
killed

Your proud, pitiless heart.

Pity never nests in the breast of
nymphs

For him who boasts severity.